



“Living a Healthier Life Can Prevent Diabetes. It’s Not Too Late.”

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Millions of Americans are currently at risk for developing type 2 diabetes. About 40 percent of adults ages 40 to 74 have pre-diabetes, a condition that raises a person’s risk for developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. Adults over 60 are at an even greater risk for type 2 diabetes. But there’s good news: a landmark clinical trial has shown that losing a small amount of weight and increasing physical activity is especially effective in reducing the risk of diabetes in older adults.

The Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), a recent study sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) involving Americans from all over the country, showed that type 2 diabetes can be delayed or even prevented through minimal weight loss by following a low-fat, low-calorie meal plan and getting 30 minutes of physical activity five times per week. These small steps worked particularly well in people aged 60 and older, *reducing the development of diabetes by 71 percent.*

Too often as older adults we feel that it’s too late for us to do much good in preventing illnesses like diabetes. We spend too much time regretting the years we spent gaining weight and not exercising. I’ve heard friends and colleagues express their feeling that it’s too late for them to make major lifestyle changes at this point in their lives. The DPP shows us that this is wrong. It’s not too late to prevent diabetes... and we can all start today.

To spread this vital message that diabetes prevention for older adults is possible and proven, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) has launched the public awareness campaign *Small Steps. Big Rewards. Prevent type 2 diabetes* with a

tailored message specific to older adults, “It’s Not Too Late to Prevent Diabetes. Take Your First Step Today.” The “It’s Not Too Late...” campaign encourages older adults to take small steps toward healthy eating and physical activity that can deliver the reward we all hope for: a long and healthy life with our loved ones.

The campaign provides free information and tools designed to help older adults at risk stop diabetes in its tracks. Prevention tip sheets show that increasing physical activity doesn’t have to be boring or hard. We can walk through our local malls. We can dance (even in our own living rooms). We can visit museums, zoos, and aquariums and be active with our families. The NDEP also encourages smart ways to eat healthy, and provides fat and calorie counters to keep track of progress and recipes for those of us who might like to try something new.

Now is the time to take control of our health, for ourselves and our families. Help your loved ones and your communities prevent diabetes by embarking on a new, healthier lifestyle. The steps are small, but the rewards are big. Lose just 5 to 7 percent of your current body weight through healthy eating and getting thirty minutes of physical activity 5 days a week, and you can significantly reduce the threat of diabetes.

Diabetes prevention is proven, possible, and powerful -- especially for older adults. Take your first step today.

For more tips on how you can prevent type 2 diabetes, visit www.ndep.nih.gov or call 1-800-438-5383 and ask for the “It’s Not Too Late to Prevent Diabetes” tip sheet.